GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1230
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2004
ILLEGAL MIGRATION TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES
Gadhavi Shri Pushpdan Shambhudan

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of cases are being reported by various Embassies regarding defrauding of people by promising to help them illegally enter the USA, UK, Canada and other countries;

(b) if so, the complete details of complaints received from various Embassies during the last two years;

(c) whether some top musicians / singers / fake sports clubs are involved in this illegal trade; and

(d) if so, the action taken by the Government to prevent such illegal migration to foreign countries?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) Yes.

(b) A statement giving the details prepared on the basis of information received from various Indian Missions / Posts abroad is annexed.

(c) Some cases of such alleged involvement have been reported.

(d) The action taken by the Government to prevent illegal migration to foreign countries include investigation by the police authorities concerned; action against the persons, including agents who are involved in illegal migration; cooperation with other countries for repatriation of illegal migrants after confirming their Indian nationality; and restricting the facility of passport to illegal migrants.

STATEMENT WITH REFERENCE TO PART (b) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1230 `ILLEGAL MIGRATION TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES`

During the past few years, a number of Indian Missions / Posts abroad have brought to Ministry`s notice several cases of Indian nationals - individually or in groups - making attempts to migrate to countries in Western Europe and North America through illegal and fraudulent means. Such cases also include defrauding of people in order to help them illegally to enter the USA, UK, Canada and other countries. Many of these illegal immigrants are from Punjab. They try to migrate illegally mainly for economic reasons and are often assisted by unscrupulous agents and touts to whom they pay large sums of money. These illegal immigrants are taken to the developed countries in Western Europe and North America through Russia and other Eastern European countries which are used as transit countries for the purpose of illegal immigration. The favoured transit routes keep changing. The general modus operandi for such activities is that after leaving India they intentionally lose or destroy their travel documents to prevent verification of their real identity / nationality status and their repatriation to India. After reaching the country of their destination they either apply for political asylum or refugee status on one ground or the other or even obtain fake / forged travel documents to establish their right of residence in the country of destination. They make use of loopholes in the local legal system, including by getting married to a local person for the purpose of obtaining citizenship, in order to prolong their stay in the country of destination with the ultimate aim of staying there permanently. However, many such illegal immigrants are caught and put in foreign jails.

2. Illegal immigration has largely been taking place from the developing and least developed countries to the developed countries in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. However, in the post-9/11 scenario European and North American countries which were favoured destinations for illegal immigration have made their rules more stringent. The result is that not only the number of persons going to these countries as illegal immigrants has come down but these countries have also started repatriating illegal immigrants to their home countries.

3. The illegal immigration from India continues to various countries of the world, particularly Western Europe and North America as also transit countries in Eastern Europe. The number of agents and touts also seems to be increasing as illegal immigrants try to use all means including illegal means, to reach their destinations.

4. Both the Central and State Governments have been working to identify agents and touts involved in illegal immigration and to take all necessary measures against them. The Government is also cooperating with the foreign countries for the speedy repatriation of Indian illegal immigrants.